



Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

INFOGRAM 27-08

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NOTE: This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at emr-isac@dhs.gov.

Auctioned Emergency Vehicles: A Vulnerability

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) received reports this week through counterterrorism channels that transnational terrorist groups in Europe and the United States may attempt to use auctioned emergency vehicles (e.g., ambulances and police cruisers) to aid in future attacks. This is a matter for consideration because American security specialists suggest that future attacks in this nation could duplicate the technique used in Iraq and Israel involving responder vehicles.

The specific concern regarding auctioned first responder vehicles pertains to their proper decommissioning. Most federal and state surplus equipment auctions are conducted by auction companies that meet certain security criteria in addition to a stringent decommissioning process for the item to be auctioned. However, once items have been purchased by an approved buyer, they can be resold without restrictions at a later date. This reality raises the possibility of “pseudo-emergency vehicles” acquired and operated by criminals or terrorists to transport stolen goods, contraband, weapons, and explosive ordnance without delay or discovery.

According to law enforcement authorities, the use of stolen, cloned, or auctioned vehicles to facilitate criminal activity is a genuine vulnerability to the safety of personnel and security of critical infrastructures. Numerous bulletins have been released in recent years detailing this growing problem in the U.S. These bulletins warned that the appearance of an official vehicle frequently reduces the inquisitiveness of emergency responders and security personnel. Furthermore, international experience demonstrates that official vehicles operating in sensitive areas will draw less scrutiny from first responders, security guards, and the general public.

It is conceivable that criminals or terrorists could deceive force protection measures, penetrate restricted areas, and transport weapons and explosive ordnance to targets by using previously auctioned emergency vehicles. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC encourages Emergency Services Sector departments and agencies to review their state and local requirements for auctioning responder vehicles, and implement practical legal changes to prevent unwanted purchases by undesirable individuals.

Additional information on used emergency vehicle sales can be seen at:
http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/BSafe/Library/used_emergency_vehicle_sales.pdf.

Avoiding Ambush

Reporting by various law enforcement agencies throughout the United States confirms that domestic criminal elements are becoming increasingly more sophisticated, creative, and dangerous. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) learned from multiple reports that some criminal groups or gangs have even employed military ambush tactics against emergency personnel. For example, police officers have been attacked when in static and mobile status, and when lured into a trap by a phony 9-1-1 call.

A recent article from the “PoliceOne.com” web site offered the following recommendations—edited by the EMR-ISAC—to avoid ambush in the performance of police, fire, and emergency medical duties:

Avoidance Measures

- Diversify professional and personal behaviors to avoid predictable patterns.
- Familiarize with potential ambush locations.
- Remain alert when stopped in traffic or at a traffic light.
- Be suspicious and careful about calls to confined areas with blocked exits.
- Maintain situational awareness by constantly using vehicle side and rear view mirrors.
- Drive in the left lane as much as possible when there is more than one lane of traffic.
- Drive with windows up and doors locked when practicable.

Measures when Attacked

- Continue in motion or get in motion when attacked.
- Stay in vehicle unless it is not operational or caught outside it.
- Exit the kill-zone without delay.
- Hunker down inside the vehicle while still able to steer.
- Drive in a zigzag pattern if possible.
- Keep driving if tires are still intact.
- Communicate the who, what, when, where, and how when safe to do so.

For more information about protecting emergency personnel, visit www.defense-training.com.

GSA Equipment Discount for ESS

Last month, President Bush signed the Local Preparedness Acquisitions Act. It authorizes the General Services Administration (GSA) to extend to Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organizations and their state and local governments the opportunity to fully participate in the agency’s cooperative purchasing program to buy homeland security equipment at discounted rates. Taking advantage of reduced prices, especially in the current economic climate, helps emergency departments and agencies conserve their resources for critical infrastructure protection (CIP) and response acquisitions.

Responder organizations will be able to procure discounted law enforcement and firefighting equipment, in addition to homeland security equipment such as alarm systems and facility management systems, all listed in GSA’s Schedule 84, but previously available only to federal agencies. When speaking with a GSA associate, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) confirmed that the implementation process to open Schedule 84 to state and local agencies will take approximately another 60 days. However, GSA suggested that emergency departments explore the available equipment and vehicles catalogued on Schedule 84 and review the GSA Advantage® tutorial before the program opens in early fall.

GSA Advantage® is described as “the online shopping and ordering system that provides access to thousands of contractors and millions of supplies and services.” The GSA Advantage® Tutorial (9.87 MB, 47 slides) explains every step involved in using the program (https://www.gsaaadvantage.gov/images/advrewrite/tutorial/S_L_tutorial_combined.ppt). State and local governments can use federal grant monies to purchase items through the GSA program. To browse the products and services offered on GSA Schedule 84, click on <http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ScheduleSummary?scheduleNumber=84>.

Community Surge and Resiliency

The Alabama Public Health Training Network, a partner of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), is offering a two-hour satellite conference and live webcast on 24 July 2008, highlighting best practices of Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies from three states that faced various disasters within the past 15 months.

City officials, first responders, hospital administrators, school leaders, and volunteers from Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi will review their local emergency responses to a tornado, hurricane, and horrendous school bus accident. Presenters will explain what worked and did not work, and what has changed, i.e., how they have updated their plans. They also will illustrate how they used Department of Homeland Security preparedness guidelines to aid their responses.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) notes that among the goals for the satellite conference/webcast are identifying potential modifications necessary to maintain essential functions during and following a pandemic; and, discussing how to collaborate with multiple local and private partners to ensure optimal response and recovery to a community event, both of which are consistent with either critical infrastructure protection (CIP) or resilience (CIR) practices.

The webcast is scheduled for 3:00-5:00 p.m. EDT, 2:00-4:00 p.m. CT, and 1:00-3:00 p.m. PT, on 24 July 2008. Conference materials, including satellite technical information and webcast information, are being posted this week at the ADPH Training Network's web site: <http://www.adph.org/alphntn/>. To link directly to the Community Surge and Resiliency brochure, click on <http://www.adph.org/alphntn/589flyer.pdf>. ESS personnel who are unable to view the live presentation can watch it, or any of the many emergency preparedness programs archived at the site at a later time by browsing the list of On Demand Webcasts at <http://www.adph.org/alphntn/default.asp?templatelnbr=3&depid=143&templateid=4379>.

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REPORTING NOTICE

The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

- 1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: nicc@dhs.gov
- 2) Your local FBI office - Web: <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>
- 3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: emr-isac@dhs.gov, fax: 301-447- 1034,
Web: www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac, Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue,
Emmitsburg, MD 21727